(ii) No.

(iii) Does not arise.

Liberal visa rules between India and Russia

†269. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to make visa rules liberal with a view to facilitate the movement of industrialists and traders between India and Russia;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) India and the Russian Federation have been discussing ways and means to facilitate travel by businesspersons of each country to the other, as their regular interaction is an important factor in further enhancing bilateral trade and investment. Both the countries attack significance to easy issuance of business visas to entrepreneurs and traders who have interest in each other's country. Various ideas have been discussed. In the second round of Consular Consultations held in Moscow in October 2003, it was agreed that an Indo-Russian Working Group will meet in India in January 2004 to further discuss this issue, among others.

India's help to defuse Sri Lankan Crisis

270. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Governmet have offered recently any sort of help to Sri Lanka Government to defuse the crisis in that country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) Government of India expressed concern over the recent political developments and issued a statement on November 4, 2003 as follows: "We are surprised at the sudden political developments in Sri Lanka today. We hope that the situation does not provoke a constitutional crisis, which would

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

impact on political stability in Sri Lanka and on the ongoing peace process. We also hope that a way can be urgently found through political dialogue to avoid these adverse consequences."

India's passive role over recent development in Sri Lanka

271. SMT. BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have chosen to resort to a passive role over the recent political developments in Sri Lanka;

(b) whether India perceives any fall-out over the Sri Lankan crisis, in terms of influx of refugees from Sri Lanka; and

(c) if so, the contingency plans put in place by India to counter refugee influx from Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) No. The Government of India expressed concern over the recent political developments and issued a statement on November 4, 2003 as follows: "We are surprised at the sudden political developments in Sri Lanka today. We hope that the situation does not provoke a constitutional crisis, which would impact on political stability in Sri Lanka and on the ongoing peace process. We also hope that a way can be urgently found through political dialogue to avoid these adverse consequences."

The political leadership in Sri Lanka keeps Government of India briefed regularly on the peace process and other developments.

(b) No. Both the President and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka have expressed their commitment to the Ceasefire Agreement and to negotiations with the LTTE for a solution to the conflict. Therefore, an influx of refugees is not expected.

(c) Does not apply.

Issuance of Visa to Indians by Indonesia

272. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indonesia has suddenly imposed a decision that Indians cannot be issued visas without clearance from Jakarta;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and